Dr. Burnets LETTER

To his Friend in LONDON.

SIR,

MY Acquaintance with you, which happily commenced at our meeting in Holland, and those many Friendly Caresses wherewith you have vouchsafed to salute me, are the daily remembrancers of that great respect and veneration I owe you, and seem to imply that I have leave to address my self to you as to an Asylum, a Place of refuge and sollicity. I know Sir, you are, to great a Friend to Truth and Honesty, that you always appear vigorous in the defence of Innocency, you comfort the Deserted, relieve the Oppressed, and to speak the sence of all that know you, your Charity is universal, and extends it self to the several exigences of those that become your Petitioners.

My circumstances at present enforce me Sir, (without any Introductions or Circumlocutions) to Sollicit your favour for the prevention of that mischief that so loudly threatens me. I am sensible that the Lashes and Persecutions of malevolent Tongues, are more intolerable than the severest of humane Afflictions, and to my great dissatisfaction I find, since my Departure, I am too too grossly Scandalized and reproach'd; what the consequence of such Popular licence may prove, such a discerning Person as your self may easily foresee. To you therefore Sir, and to all other Gentlemen of the like integrity and veracity, I apply my self, that by your undaunted Vindication of me, you may put a check to that impetuous torrent of Scandal that seems to overwhelm me.

I am lately Sir, expos'd and insufferably abus'd, not only by the perverse Tongues of inveterate Men, whose Passions are as irregular as their Morals, but by the wider and more licentious Mouth of the Press: The Scurrilous Pamphlet has circulated the Town, and by this time I presume it is seen by you. How full of Spleen and

and Malice it is, is eaſily diſcernable by any unprejudic'd Perſon. The Spirit of malediction is ſo notoriouſly viſible throught every line, that one would think People ſhould not be ſo credulous as to take for granted what is ſo ſilly inſinuated by the mercenary Scribler. I ſhall therefore unravel all the Vanity, Folly, and Inconſiſtency of that Sheet, that bears ſo hard upon my Reputation. Wherein you muſt underſtand, he firſt gives me the Title of a *Confeſſor*, yes, and *Confeſſor* to the late King of *B----d* too. A great promotion, to which this inſignificant Pamphleteer advances me. Certainly if ever Impudence be reckoned a Vertue, 'twill be now, for never did Sham and Impoſture prevail upon a People as at this Inſtant.

2. The next Complement he affords me is no leſs than a deep dy'd *Rebel*, and makes me leap from *England* to *Holland* in a moment; and to ſhew himſelf a man of Judgment, he pretends a ſubſtantial Reaſon for ſo doing; which is the likeneſs, or (his hard word) *Congeniality* to the *Cauſe* here. Profound piece of Scandal! I would fain know whether this mighty man of Parallels, values himſelf upon ſuch a production; if he does, I muſt tell him, that any *Billingſgate* Oyſter-woman can eaſily arrive at the like Excellence: For Scandal and Reproach is the Talent of the Rabble, and Porters and Carmen can challenge as great a ſhare as our Scribler. But however Sir, this is my comfort, that men of that Sobriety and ſeriouſneſs of Life with your ſelf, cannot eaſily entertain any vile or mean thought of me. Now after all this clutter about *Hungarian* Rebels, his *Tupſky*'s *Perkinsky*'s; his ridiculous chiming with *Rowt*'s and *Riots*, *Confuſion* and *Faction*; his prophane intermixing Sacred Hiſtory with his excrementitious Stuff, his ridiculous diſcourſe of the *Acts* of the *Dyet*, his fooliſh ſtory of Milk and Mackrel. What is it the Gentleman fixes upon me? Why Sir, 'tis ſome Enormous Crime, ſome *Grande nefas, & morte piannum*, no leſs than *Miſpriſion* at leaſt. Now, where's the proof of what is ſo heavily laid to my charge? Not a word of Seriouſneſs argument, or any thing like to be found.

I ſhall therefore to ſatisfie you Sir, (and all whoſe curioſity leads 'em to peruſe thoſe Pamphlets that are daily vended) open my ſelf with all ingenuous freedom and plainneſs, for the confirmation of that good opinion you have conceiv'd of me. The general outcry againſt me, is in reference to that Gentleman my late Lord *Ruſſel*, of my adviſing him to conceal and palliate thoſe things which he ſeem'd to confeſs of his own inclination; the report is ſo currant and ſo univerſally received, that it is not without great difficulty to remove their Prejudices. But thoſe that will credit Truth when 'tis deliver'd with ſuch aſſervations, can diſtinguiſh betwixt Credulity and miſtaken zeal, and I ſuppoſe will vouchſafe to believe me upon thoſe Proteſtations.

1. I declare that I had no other deſign in viſiting my Lord in his unhappy circumſtances, than to give him Spiritual inſtructions and advice for the benefit of his Immortal Soul. Let the malice of men ſuggeſt what it pleaſes, the diſtates of my own Conſcience

Conſcience tell me, that I have done nothing but what a Chriſtian might honourably juſtifie before the Face of the whole World. And in that capacity of a Divine I reckon'd it my Duty (conſidering my Acquaintance with his Lordſhip) to interpoſe with my Prayers and Spiritual aſſiſtances. But for having that influence over his Lordſhip as People would fain repreſent, is a miſtake as groundleſs as ridiculous. Beſides, they little imagine how much they reflect upon his Lordſhips judgment, to be byaſt according to the inſinuations of any near him. 'Tis certain my Lord fell not under the Character of ſo injudicious a Perſon amongſt the knowing part of Mankind, as to be ſo eaſy and credulous as to be modell'd according to any one's Fancy.

But for my ſelf I muſt declare that I had no Intereſt in paying him thoſe frequent Viſits, but the real promotion of his Souls Eternal welfare.

2. As for my diſaffection to the preſent Eſtabliſh'd Government, or my lukewarmneſs, or damn'd neutrality, (as they call it) 'tis as Groundleſs as the former objection againſt me. I am, I preſume, ſo well known, that I need not make any great Apology for this calumny againſt me. Thoſe that have had the opportunity of my Converſation and the advantage of my Miniſtry, cannot find by any of my Diſcourſes any thing tending to the derogation of the Government.

However, this abuſive Pamphleteer takes great Freedom with me, and 'tis no wonder, for it muſt be an elevated piece of Impudence that does the thing, when nothing of reality appears in the Accuſation

3. Be pleas'd to obſerve the Scurrility of his Language; he ſays I have nothing but a *Religious Cant to recommend me to the Obſervation of any Judicious Perſon.* I have no mind to take notice of the obloquy, ſince I am not fond of my Credit in that particular. There is no man has more humble thoughts of himſelf than I have; and for his envious, that I was taken notice of before any of the Reverend Prelates of the Land, by the Members of Parliament; I have nothing to ſay at preſent, but that my Deſigns were Honourable, without any affectation of Popularity.

I muſt be bold to ſay that I have a great veneration for that *Auguſt* Aſſembly, and what I have deliver'd from the Pulpit has been honeſtly deſign'd and meant.

4. As for thoſe Doctrines which he would needs inſinuate that I approve, I utterly deny it. *Reſiſtance and taking up Arms againſt Lawful Authority*, is a Doctrine I never believ'd, neither did I ever teach or encourage it: My Converſation has been always peaceable, free from extreams; and if my ſtrictneſs of Life, and ſtrongly inculcating of it to others is become a Crime, I wonder to what a pitch of impiety the World will come. As I have been a Son of the Church of *England*, I endeavour'd (in that Sphere I was) to keep up its Credit and Reputation againſt the wild opinions of ſome hot Brain'd People. But I find let a man be never ſo Orthodox, ſome People (who make it their buſineſs to diſparage our Reformed Religion) will find ſomewhat whereby to calumniate and reproach him.

him. I wish this licentious Spirit of Malediction may be stopp'd, otherwise I cannot find but the very Foundations of our Church and Religion will Totter, and come to Ruines; I am sure some would be glad *to see her in the Duſt*.

Lastly, for the other inconsistant foppery's, his imputation of *Lucchery* and *Treachery*, to pass it over in silence would be the greatest piece of Prudence. The great Scepticks of the Age know no more compendious way to affront Religion, than by casting dirt in the Face of its professors; and in their most remarkable Attacks they are sure something will stick close, that afterwards may reflect upon a man's Reputation; *furis per calumniam, dicendi licentia*.

Now after all Sir, I must beg your pardon for this Freedom, in molesting you with such unpolished Reflections; however my design is to undeceive a too credulous World, that those common popular reflections on me are the inventions of Malice and Revenge. I find other men that make considerable Figures in the Church, cannot be exempted from unwarrantable Reproaches, what with their Queries, &c. No serious Person can be secure without being Stigmatiz'd.

To you therefore I apply my self, that by your Influence over your Acquaintance you may stop that Torrent that seems to carry all before it. This you may please to let the World know that the Doctor (for reasons best known to himself) tho' at present retired, will appear again to the Confusion and Confutation of such pedantick Calumniators as our insignificant Pamphleteer. I am with all respect and submission,

Your Humble Servant
G. B.

FINIS.

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